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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WILLITON.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1957.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

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BURNELL'S GARAGE,WOOTTON COURTNEY - REFUSE COLLECTION (By Contract).

WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1957.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr.Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report on the health and sanitation of the district for the year 1957.
The general health of the district has been satisfactory, there being no epidemic disease of any consequence.
In the following sections I detail the work of the department during the year, together with vital statistics and the general public health services.

Section A. Vital Statistics and Social Conditions.
Section B. Water Supplies, Sewage and Refuse Disposal.
Section C. Housing.
Section D. Food Inspection and Supplies.
Section E. Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.
Section F. Camping.
Section G. Other Acts administered by the Department.
Section H. Summary of Inspections and Visits made by the Department's Officers.

Section A.
Vital Statistics & Social Conditions.

The year has not been a very eventful one for the Public Health Department. In the month of April, an epidemic of measles started in the Eastern Parishes, spreading across the Central Parishes by July. Five cases of Poliomyelitis were reported in the area, one of which proved fatal. Housing conditions continue to improve and by the end of the year the only serious shortage was to be found in the Parish of Williton and its immediate neighbouring Parishes.
Employment continues mainly agricultural but with a large number going to the industries of Minehead and Watchet. By the end of the year works had commenced upon the Nuclear Power Station at Hinkley Point and its approach road. This project is likely to attract a labour force of over 2,000 for many years. The Council has been approached to help in accommodating 50 families for the permanent staff, and providing a caravan site for constructional staff.

Area	97,364
Population (Estimated mid-year home population)	13,390
Number of Dwelling Houses	4,395
Rateable Value	£120,519
Product of a Penny Rate	£450

Live Births.	M.	F.	Total.
Legitimate	89	87	176
Illegitimate	3	2	5
Total -	92	89	181

Birth Rate per 1000 population (live births)	13.5
National Rate per 1000	16.1

Still Births.	M.	F.	Total.
Legitimate	5	-	-
Illegitimate	-	1	-
	5	1	6

Deaths.

From all causes	121	92	213

Death Rate per 1000 population 15.9
National Rate per 1000 ..... 11.5

Health Services.
The District is served by Hospitals at Minehead and Musgrove Park, Taunton, and Hospitals for the Aged Sick at Williton, Bridgwater and Taunton.
Ambulance services, voluntarily run, are available from Watchet and Minehead, also from Musgrove Park.
Steam disinfection facilities continue to be available at the Williton and District Hospital.

Notifiable Diseases.	Cases Notified.
Smallpox	Nil
Scarlet Fever	1
Diphtheria	Nil
Enteric Fever	"
Measles	37
Whooping Cough	17
Puerperal Pyrexia	Nil
Opthalmia Neonatorum	"
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	"
Dysentery	"
Malaria	"
Pneumonia	3
Acute Poliomyelitis	5
Encephalitis Lethargica	Nil
Erysipelas	"
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	2
" (Non-respiratory)	Nil
Food Poisoning	3

Section B.
Water Supplies, Sewage and Refuse Disposal.
There were no serious shortages of water in the district during the year although restrictions on its use were imposed at Selworthy and Porlock. At Monksilver it was necessary to turn off the supply for a time each day to effect an appreciable saving.
As before mentioned, the bacteriological quality of many of the unchlorinated supplies has proved unsatisfactory; probably the only economic, and certainly the most satisfactory way of dealing with this defect is to centralise the supplies and provide proper treatment plant where necessary.
The chemical quality of the various supplies is entirely satisfactory. Twenty-two samples for chemical analysis were taken during the year Bacteriological samples amounted to 311, of which 69 were from chlorinated supplies and 242 from untreated supplies; 8 of the samples from treated, and 52 from untreated supplies proved unsatisfactory. Wherever possible, remedial action was taken and in many instances re-sampling showed an improvement in quality.
Efforts on extensions, etc, by the Engineer's Department have been directed almost entirely to the scheme whereby all the Central Parishes will be supplied from the Taunton Corporation's reservoir at Clatworthy. Many amendments have had to be made to the original scheme, now that the Eastern Parishes of the district will also be supplied from this source. This decision came about by the fact that the C.E.A. requires a million gallons of pure water per day for the running of the Nuclear Power Station at Hinkley Point and it

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was suggested that this could most easily and economically be supplied from the Clatworthy Reservoir via our proposed trunk mains which could be enlarged and extended to Hinkley Point. The scheme included the purchase by the Local Authority of Estate-owned supplies at Stogursey. This has already been done and a portion of trunk main laid between Stogursey and Hinkley Point to provide a temporary supply of water for construction purposes from the old Estate sources.

Sewage Disposal.

The Crowcombe and Blue Anchor sewerage schemes are well under way and will be a great improvement on existing sanitary arrangements. The housing improvement grant scheme is helping in removing isolated nuisances of drainage emptying crude into ditches and water courses.

Some septic tanks continue to cause concern particularly where effluents tend to drain into highways.

Refuse Disposal.

Refuse was collected by contract as in previous years. Four tips are still in regular use, three of them being in disused quarries the other on the foreshore of Porlock Bay. There has been no serious nuisance of any kind, but an everpresent reminder of the inadequacy of the present collection service is the dumping of household and trade refuse in water courses, beside roadways, etc.

Litter.

The litter baskets distributed throughout the district continue to be regularly made use of and it is hoped to extend this service. Emptying is carried out regularly, this work being shared by the refuse contractors and the Council's own staff.

Section C.

Housing.

The number of houses in the district increased by 69 to a total of 4,395.

Closure of individual unfit houses has continued but wherever practicable an effort has been made to rehabilitate the dwelling with the offer of grant aid under the Housing Acts.

Forty-one applications were received for grant aid in respect of 50 dwellings. Of these, 37 applications were approved for the modernisation of 46 dwellings. Four schemes in respect of 4 dwellings were rejected as unsuitable. Sixteen of the applications were from owner-occupiers. The average cost of improvement works per dwelling modernised was £818.

The effect of the Rent Act has not yet been felt by the department other than in the application for, and issuing, of two Certificates of Disrepair. In each case only part of the defects detailed by the tenants were awarded as in the opinion of the Council, some items detailed were in the nature of improvements.

Section D.

Food Inspection & Supplies.

The amount of meat and offal inspected in the district has increased by 8% during the year due mainly to the re-opening of all the licenced slaughterhouses in the district. These are scattered over the area and meat inspection duties account for an appreciable amount of time and traveling. Overtime duties are carried out by both inspectors.

The slaughterhouses are structurally sound and in good repair but none is of the standard indicated by the Government White Paper "Slaughterhouses-Recommended Minimum Standards for the Construction, Layout, etc." dated August 1957. The existing licenced slaughterhouse premises have been surveyed and the departments observations conveyed to the owners with the intention that butchers may be in some position to know what to do as and when regulations come into force.

The arrangement whereby condemned meat and offal is taken to local Hunt kennels continues satisfactorily

Carcases & Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle-excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed.	626	20	73	2525	639	Nil
Number inspected.	606	20	62	2497	609	Nil
All diseases except T.B. and Cysticerci.						
Whole carcases condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	13	1	Nil
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	81	12	Nil	15	28	Nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than T.B. and Cysticerci.	13.2%	60%	-	0.64%	4.59%	
T.B. only.						
Whole carcases condemned.	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Part or organ condemned.	14	2	Nil	Nil	28	Nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with T.B.	2.47%	10%	Nil	Nil	4.59%	Nil
Cysticercosis.						
Carcases affected	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Weight of Meat condemned (Lbs)-						
(a) Tuberculosis	1563	30	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(b) Cysticercosis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(c) Other	462½	67	Nil	542½	305	Nil
Total -	2025½	97	Nil	542½	305	Nil

Other Foodstuffs Condemned.

Cooked Meats	-	19¼ lbs
Tinned "	-	8 tins
Margarine	-	18 lbs
Tinned Fruit	-	33 tins
Fish	-	16 lbs

Food Premises & Food Hygiene.

The standard of food hygiene, and the general structure and fitments in catering and other food establishments continues to be high.
No certificates of exemption have been applied for.
There is a gradual improvement in general hygiene conditions in licenced premises.

Section E.

Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.

A nuisance that is constantly coming to light is that of the discharge of septic tank contents by Contractors on agricultural land near dwellings. There being no large sewage disposal works in the district, spreading on land is the usual method of disposal of tank solids. Contractors carrying out this work have been notified that disposal must be as far from dwellings as is reasonably practicable, pending more suitable arrangements.
Litter has only reached the nuisance stage at Bank Holidays.
Nuisances from fly and other insect infestations have been very few.
Fewer disinfections where cases of infectious disease have occurred have been necessary.

Rodent Control.
The Council's operative has been fully employed throughout the year, treatments and inspections carried out are as follows :-

Property.	Inspected.	Treated.
Domestic	443	412
Agricultural	80	42
Business	13	8
Local Authority	21	15
Total-	557	477

Sewer treatments have been carried out in accordance with Ministry requirements and 'block control' schemes operated where necessary.

Section F.

Camping.

The seasonal camping population was much the same as the previous year. At Bank Holiday times there was an overflow of campers from the recognised sites on to adjoining land. Site proprietors made some attempt to control litter by providing a farm-cart receptacle in the camp. This proved fairly successful. One camp site provides individual dustbins for each caravan and tent.

The residential camping population is small.

On any one day during the summer season, upwards of 2,500 people were camping in the area.

Section G.

Factories Act, 1937.

There are 51 factories in the district. No complaints have been received from H.M. Inspector of Factories.

Nine inspections have been made by the department's officers in regard to sanitary accommodation and means of escape in case of fire.

There are 14 outworkers residing in, and employed within the district.

Pet Animals Act.

Rag Flock Act.

There are no pet shops within the district or premises dealing in rag flock.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.

Details of action taken are dealt with under Section E.

Section H.

Summary of Visits & Inspections.

Housing Acts, 1936-1954.	
Housing Inspections	572
Informal Notices Served	37
Statutory Notices Served	7
Public Health Acts.	
Inspections of Drainage & Sewerage	124
" " Water Supplies	52
" " Refuse Disposal	126
" " Camping Sites	74
" " Filthy or Verminous Premises	30
" " Sanitary Fittings	7
" " Nuisances	48
" " Public Conveniences	17
Miscellaneous Inspections	30
Infectious Diseases Enquiries	8
Informal Notices Served	9
Food & Drugs Act.	
Inspections of Food & Catering Establishments	46
" " Slaughterhouses	38
" " Knackers Yards	3
Factories Act.	
Inspections	15
Informal Notices Served	8
Total Complaints received	127
" " investigated	127

It is to be hoped that 1958 will see a resumption of building in the area of Williton and continued progress in the provision of public sewers.
Once again my thanks are due to the staff of the Public Health Department for their continued good work.

Iam, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

M.B., Ch.B.

Medical Officer of Health.

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